

THE ORIGINS OF OLD CLEVELAND ROAD

by Fr. MICHAEL A. ENDICOTT,
O.S.A., M.A.

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The establishment of a public thoroughfare is usually an expression of corporate human intent. With the history of a roadway it is thus fortuitous if one can discern the reasons for its formation. In the case of the 148-year-old route we know as Old Cleveland Road, it is these reasons that make its history so interesting.

After a matter of weeks at Redcliffe the fledgling Moreton Bay settlement of 1824 was transferred to the region that has become the central business district of Brisbane. This change of location solved some problems but created others. One limitation of the new site was that it was inaccessible to supply ships from Sydney. Certainly, the locality was drained by a broad river; however the Sydney vessels could not cross the sandbars at the river's mouth.

On a visit to the new settlement in June 1827, Governor Darling was unimpressed with this choice of an upstream location; he would have preferred a position beside the waters of Moreton Bay. By using the south entrance between today's Stradbroke and Moreton Islands as a shipping passage from the Pacific Ocean into the Bay, a settlement at any anchorage in the southern portion of the Bay would have been most conveniently situated for supply ships from the southern ports.

Soon after his return to Sydney the Governor initiated the formation of a small settlement on what was named Stradbroke

Father Michael Endicott, O.S.A., M.A., is a priest-teacher at Villanova College, Coorparoo. A church historian and a doctoral candidate in History at the University of Queensland, in November 1975 he published a booklet, "Coorparoo and Saint James' Church".

All surveys mentioned in this article are located at the Queensland Survey Office; copies of the early maps are at the John Oxley Memorial Library.

Island. Earlier in 1827, Captain Rous sailed *H.M.S. Rainbow* into Moreton Bay; Rous was the son of the Earl of Stradbroke, whose heir was Viscount Dunwich.

A warehouse, soldiers' barracks, convict quarters and a stone jetty were built on the bay side of the island at a locality named Dunwich. When this Stores Depot began functioning in 1828, ships discharged cargo there and when it was available took on backloading such as cedar or maize for southern ports. After a brief "turn around" time, the ship would be sailing out of the bay on its return voyage.

The supplies offloaded at the Dunwich Stores Depot were then shipped across the bay to Brisbane with convict assistance. This procedure continued until approximately 1831.

Captain Patrick Logan, the Commandant, Charles Fraser, the Colonial Botanist, and Allan Cunningham, botanist and explorer, visited Dunwich on 18 July 1828. In the following year Cunningham prepared a map that provides the earliest evidence of a land route — in all probability little more than a line of blazed trees — from Brisbane to Emu (now Cleveland) Point, a peninsula that is the nearest mainland access to Dunwich.

In 1829 Cunningham also prepared a map that showed Emu Point joined to Cowper's (now spelt, and always pronounced *Cooper's*) Plains, the site of a cattle station conducted by the penal settlement. This station was on the bank of Canoe (now Oxley) Creek, a little west of the suburb of Coopers Plains today.

A map of Moreton Bay was compiled in Sydney during 1846 by Robert Dixon, formerly a Government surveyor in Brisbane. He showed the same track from Cowper's Plains to Cleveland Point, but indicated no route between Brisbane and Cleveland Point.

Cowper's Plains was located on the track from the southern boundary of Brisbane to the convict lime-burning works established in 1826 by Captain Logan at Limestone (now Ipswich). As was the case between Brisbane and Dunwich, the movement of supplies between Brisbane and Limestone was by water. There is thus no justification in expecting the state of the routes linking Brisbane, Cowper's Plains and Emu Point with one another to be anything more than very rudimentary.

The Moreton Bay Penal Settlement was broken up officially on 21 May 1839, and the incoming Lieutenant Owen Gorman had the task of preparing for the civil administration and private

occupation of the region. Settlers were advised that they would be unable to purchase land until sufficient survey work had been completed.

Three surveyors — Granville Stayplton, Robert Dixon (mentioned above), and James Warner — were directed to participate in this task. The first land sale in Brisbane then took place in August 1843.

JAMES WARNER'S SURVEYS

The work of surveyor James Warner is of particular and continuing interest to this study. On 26 October 1839, he submitted his "Trace of Norman's Creek from its confluence with the Brisbane River". Norman Creek, as it is known today, is the stream near the beginning of the present Old Cleveland Road at Stones Corner.

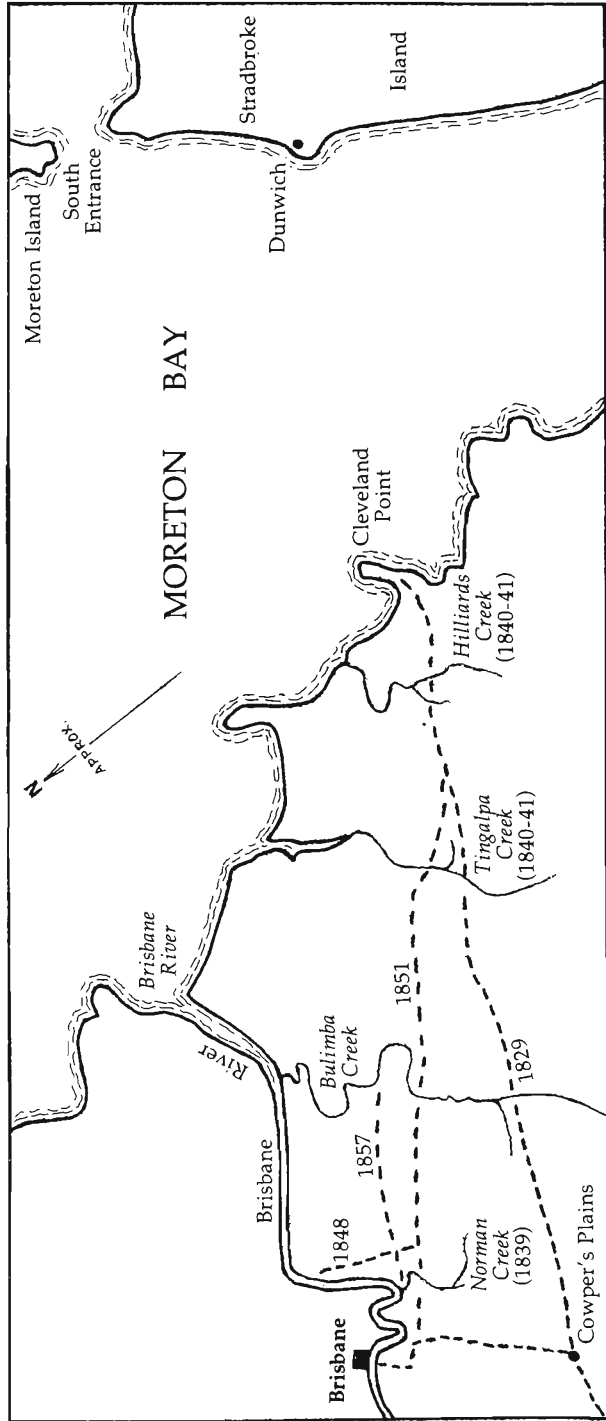
Warner then proceeded to survey the two major creeks that the Brisbane-Cleveland roadway has always had to cross — Hilliard's Creek and Tingalpa Creek (now sometimes popularly called Capalaba Creek). The title on the survey in Warner's handwriting is revealing: "Plan of two creeks flowing into Moreton Bay, also part of a proposed line of road from a point called Cleveland Point (selected as the only apparently eligible site for a maritime township along this shore of the Bay) towards Cowper's Plains. 1st July, 1841".

In the water off the Point is the notation: "Deep Water, 4 fathoms". These factors suggest that by 1841, the site for a port was being mooted.

It should be kept in mind that both the 1839 and 1841 surveys in question were of creeks. No tracks then extant were included, although Warner marked any point where a bridge across a swamp or an established creek ford was situated. A survey indicates only lasting or immovable markers such as blazed trees, bridges, or survey pegs by which the boundaries of future allotments can be accurately defined.

The path of a track could vary from year to year and even from season to season, and if recorded would not serve the survey's formal purpose. By means of these surveys of the area, it is possible to say that the pre-1840 track out of Cleveland proceeded to a dray ford on Tingalpa Creek 2.4 kilometres upstream from where Old Cleveland Road now crosses this creek at the Capalaba Bridge.

Some features marked on early maps and surveys mentioned in the accompanying article are shown on the above diagram (not to scale), and the date of the pertinent document is included in each case. The dotted lines show the route from Cowper's Plains to Cleveland (1829), the 1850 "practicable road" to Brisbane, the 1848 track from Bulimba to the Cleveland track at Camp Hill, and the beginning of Wynnum Road (1857) once the mouth of Norman Creek was bridged.



A line of dots on Warner's survey indicates the "part of a proposed line of road towards Cowper's Plains" mentioned in the survey's title. This road that Warner in 1841 proposed but did not survey, would have offered a more direct route to Tingalpa Creek than the one in use, mentioned above. It is headed for a point on the creek upstream from the wall of the Leslie Harrison Dam. Before the dam was built, this crossing would have been where Geldart Road, Chandler, and Allambee Crescent, Capalaba, faced each other across the creek.

It would appear that the crossing point he proposed was being used by some passers-by in 1840; as will be explained later, at this location Warner marked a tree with the words "To Brisbane" in that year.

The 1841 survey shows only one crossing of Tingalpa Creek. In surveys made subsequently, roads to Cleveland from Cowper's Plains emphasises the Ipswich-based graziers' interest that can be inferred in the survey's very title, i.e. a maritime township at Cleveland Point, serviced by an improved road to Ipswich via Cowper's Plains.

Once free settlement began and inter-colonial commerce by sea developed, the question of the provision of port facilities arose. In its natural state, the Brisbane River did not afford entry for trading ships. Loading these vessels from lighters as they stood off the mouth of the river was a costly and time-consuming procedure that was tolerated but never regarded as more than a temporary arrangement.

Ipswich interests saw a twofold advantage in promoting a port at Cleveland Point. Positively, it would allow the direct loading of cargo ships, which was not then possible at Brisbane town; negatively, it would deny Brisbane a role in Ipswich exports. In Ipswich eyes, Brisbane was both a town with an unsavoury recent past and a commercial rival not to be encouraged.

Even so, the contest for the location of the port for the Moreton Bay district of New South Wales never really tilted in favour of Cleveland Point. When by 1842 the supposed merits of a port at Brisbane and Cleveland Point had sufficiently buffeted Sydney officialdom in the form of claims and counter-claims, Governor Gipps decided to call at Cleveland Point en route to Brisbane.

Some have proposed that his arrival off Cleveland Point at low tide was a foul Brisbane conspiracy. What at least was foul was the temper of His Excellency who was constrained to wade

through Bay mud to reach the shore. Historian J. J. Knight suggested that the episode did little to ingratiate the vicinity with the Governor.

The hopes of Cleveland Point were quashed in 1849 with the official acceptance of the recommendation by Captain Owen Stanley, R.N., that the coveted port be established on the Kangaroo Point reach of the Brisbane River.

PLANS FOR TOWNSHIP

Not ones to submit too early, the advocates of Cleveland Point maintained pressure upon Sydney and were rewarded in 1849 by a direction from Major Thomas Mitchell, Surveyor-General of the Colony of New South Wales, that a township be surveyed at Cleveland Point as per the suggestion of James Warner in his 1841 survey. Warner submitted the "Survey of Allotments in Section 1 and 2 in the Town of Cleveland" on 25 April 1851.

The first sale of Cleveland town lots took place in Brisbane on 13 August 1851. The blocks sold rapidly at speculative prices, assisted by the possibility that the town might become the foremost community of the entire Bay region.

This hope glowed for a number of years. A wool store was built there by Fredrick Bigge, and bales were carried there by means of the Cowper's Plains track. The first ship engaged to convey wool from Cleveland to Great Britain was the *Countess of Derby*, a barque of 329 tons. It was wrecked in attempting to enter the bay by the southern passage on 31 October 1853.

On 16 January 1854, *Courier*, a brig of 336 tons, was ready to depart with 300 bales on board, when it caught fire and burned to the waterline. Two other events in following months helped toll the knell of Cleveland as a port: in April the shipping agents abandoned Cleveland, and May saw the first loading of a London-bound ship at a Brisbane wharf.

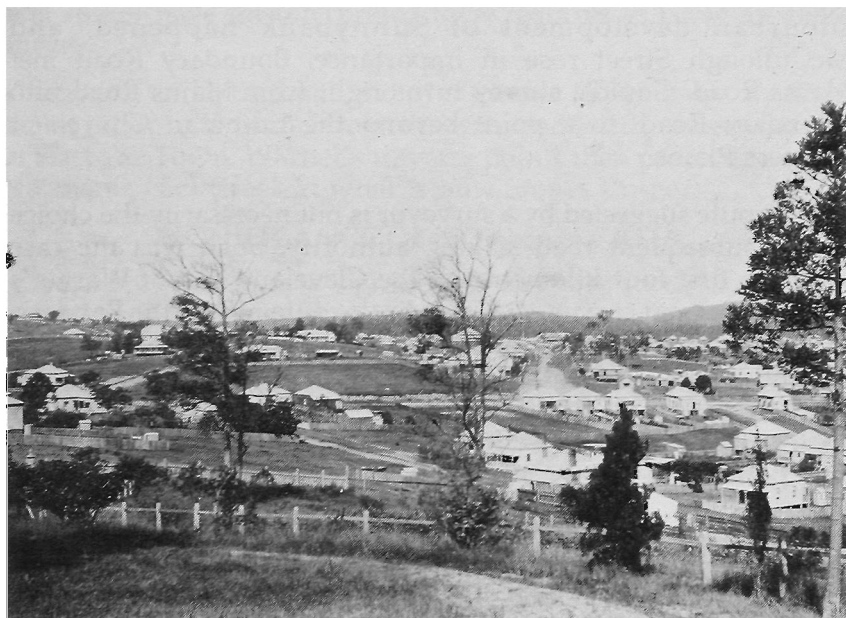
The decision in 1849 to plan a town on Cleveland Point made it logical to call for the surveying of a road from there to Brisbane. Thus on 22 May 1850, Warner submitted his "Survey of a practicable road from Brisbane in the County of Stanley to the proposed Town of Cleveland in the same County". Today's Old Cleveland Road was officially born.

From the knowledge he had gained from surveying Tingalpa Creek in 1840-41, Warner was aware of at least two points where his "practicable road" could cross it. One point was the ford (on some other surveys called a "dray ford") he had chosen for his proposed line of road to Cowper's Plains.

In working on his 1851 survey Warner went so far as to survey from this dray ford to a point where today, Tilley Road, Belmont, meets Old Cleveland Road. Even so, he finally opted to have his practicable road across Tingalpa Creek at what he termed a "horse ford", meaning the stream at that point had water too deep or banks too steep for the convenient passage of drays and wagons in all seasons.

This second position is approximately where the Capalaba Bridge carries Old Cleveland Road across Tingalpa Creek today. Selection of this ford rather than the dray ford, 2.4 kilometres upstream straightened the practicable road, and thus shortened its length to Brisbane. Once the creek was bridged, there would be no difficulty offered to wheeled traffic by selection of this particular crossing.

That Warner's choice was subsequently adopted is evidenced by the "Survey of a road from Coopers Plains to Rocky Crossing, Tingalpa Creek, Cleveland Road", by surveyor Gould in 1861. Gould labelled the dray ford as part of the 'old Brisbane road', and the horse ford as the 'present road'.



A view of Old Cleveland Road, Coorparoo, taken in 1908 from the vantage point now occupied by Villanova College. The road extending away from the camera is Rialto Street. The corner of Kirkland Avenue and Old Cleveland Road is at the extreme left edge of the photograph.

When after 1850 the point where Tingalpa Creek was negotiated shifted as explained above, the junction of the roads to Coopers Plains and Brisbane had to be moved to the new crossing. This junction appears in the Gould 1861 survey, and still exists today as the point where the Mt. Gravatt-Capalaba Road meets Old Cleveland Road on the Brisbane side of the Capalaba Bridge.

It is interesting to see a Brisbane City Council map of 1926 call the present Mt. Gravatt-Capalaba Road by the name *Old Cleveland Road*; today's Old Cleveland Road was labelled simply as *Cleveland Road*.

Roadways now exist over most of the route of Gould's 1861 survey. Although it begins at the Capalaba junction mentioned above, the present beginning of the Mt. Gravatt-Capalaba Road was re-surveyed to skirt the waters of the Leslie Harrison Dam. However, the 1861 survey route is covered by the rest of the Mt. Gravatt-Capalaba Road, and then becomes Kessels Road on the other side of the current Pacific Highway.

Gould's route then turns left into Mains Road. Before the suburban development of Sunnybank happened, and McCullough Street rose in importance, Boundary Road met Mains Road. Gould's survey turns right from Mains Road into Boundary Road, to a point beyond the Lutheran Church at Coopers Plains.

The route suggested by a surveyor is not necessarily the choice of the subsequent road-making authority. Such was the case with the first four kilometres at the Cleveland end of Warner's practicable road survey. A more-direct route nearer the Bay was, in fact, used. The next four kilometres of his route are today roughly followed by the Redland Bay Road from Capalaba. However, inbound from Tingalpa Creek, Capalaba, the Warner 1850 survey and the present Old Cleveland Road follow an identical path.

Warner's task in 1850 was to undertake a centre-line survey of the route he would propose. The survey would have been ordered so that when land sales began, a suitable right of way — one chain each side of the centre line — would be protected. Even so, the precise path in use need not necessarily have coincided with the surveyed route until the appearance of fences made travellers keep to the surveyed roadway.

Beside the dray ford of the 1850 survey is the notation — “Gum four sides Warner 1840 to Brisbane”. It obviously refers to a surveyor’s marking four sides of a gum tree at the creek crossing. What he carved on the four sides would have been his name, the date and a pointing finger with “To Brisbane”.

What was Warner’s task at Tingalpa Creek in 1840? He would have been surveying the creek, as formally completed in the survey he submitted on 1 July 1841.

In historical articles published by different authors in 1940, 1956 and 1972, it is stated that Old Cleveland Road was first surveyed in 1840. According to the Brisbane Survey Office, the Warner 1850 survey is the first one of the road — otherwise Government surveying procedure would have required Warner to mark the previous survey on his 1850 plan for purposes of correlation.

Officers at the Survey Office can see only one source for the error of thinking there was an 1840 Old Cleveland Road survey. They suspect that persons seeing the 1840 tree blaze by Warner, and noting the traverse points leading from it to Belmont (explained above as one of Warner’s 1850 feasibility studies for the best route) have misinterpreted these features as being an 1840 survey.

Turning to the Brisbane end of Warner’s 1850 survey, we note that it began at Vulture Street, the surveyed south-eastern corner of Brisbane Town. Warner’s traverse points then proceed to cross Norman’s (sic) Creek at what is now Stones Corner.

SIGNIFICANCE OF NORMAN CREEK

Norman Creek was a significant landmark in the area. Unnamed, this creek was included on a map by John Oxley in 1823, even before white settlement began. In September 1825, Major Edmond Lockyer of the 57th Regiment marked it on his map of the Brisbane River. One can still read where he printed the words, “Norman’s Creek”. In whose honour the creek was named has escaped the notice of history.

In a curious map in the Mitchell Library, entitled “Darling Downs, New England, Clarence, Moreton Bay and Liverpool Plains districts, compiled expressly for Baker’s Australian Atlas, July 1846”, the name *Gorman’s Creek* makes its sole appearance. Was this an effort by a publisher to honour the last officer-in-charge of Moreton Bay Penal Settlement, whose term ended in 1842, or was it merely the mistake of a printer’s devil?

Whichever the case, 110 years later in 1956, it led astray one late historian, who championed Gorman's Creek as the original name of the waterway.



Norman Creek, Brisbane, about 1890. Oxley Memorial Library collection.

The first Governmental development of land almost adjacent to the southern boundary of Brisbane Town happened in 1848. The first fourteen portions of the Parish of Bulimba were sold as farms, subsequent to the survey "Fourteen special country lots, Parish of Bulimba, James Warner, 6th June, 1848".

Vegetables and bananas grown there were taken to town by boat. To bring a horse or vehicle from Bulimba to Brisbane by public river transport required travelling to the North Quay-South Brisbane crossing point. The land route from Bulimba to this reach of the river was made longer by the need to detour the unbridged and low-lying mouth of Norman Creek.

A resident had to leave Bulimba by travelling inland to the Cleveland track at the point where today, Bennetts and Old Cleveland Roads meet at the bottom of Camp Hill. From there, he followed the then unsurveyed Cleveland track inbound.

Bulimba travellers contributed their traffic to the Cleveland track until 1856, when the first bridge across the mouth of Norman Creek was opened. This bridge also presented Cleveland traffic a shortened route to town by means of the "new Cleve-

land Road'', i.e. today's Wynnum Road. Thus, in 1856, the road to Cleveland through Coorparoo and Tingalpa became the Old Cleveland Road in fact, if not then in name.

In 1856, when Old Cleveland Road lost its Cleveland and Bulimba traffic, another *raison d'être* presented itself. Pleased with what the Bulimba land sales had achieved in 1848, the Government chose to repeat the procedure in 1856 by offering farm lots on the banks of Norman Creek. Warner submitted his "Survey of ten farms in the Parish of Bulimba, County of Stanley" on 17 June 1856.

The Proclamation of Sale printed in the *N.S.W. Government Notices* shortly before the auction on 21 October 1856, uses the phrase "the high Cleveland Road" — referring to the fact that Old Cleveland Road avoided the low-lying mouth of Norman Creek that the new Cleveland Road traversed.

The Coorparoo land to be sold lay on the eastern side of Old Cleveland Road between Stones Corner and Bennetts Road. Because private property would then front the eastern edge of the road, the surveying of these farms also constituted the first edge survey anywhere along the length of Old Cleveland Road.

Recall that Warner's 1850 "practicable road" survey had been a centre-line survey. In making these farm lots front Old Cleveland Road, he made their land end one chain from the 1850 centre-line.

The opposite edge of Old Cleveland Road was surveyed by Warner on 13 January 1857, in preparation of lots for the second Coorparoo land auction. By surveying the properties to face the roadway, the confines of the road were delineated simultaneously.

However, until landowners erected fences, there was no guarantee that the rider of a horse or the driver of a wagon would bother to look for survey pegs in order to keep to the official roadway. When the path ahead was too rutted or too muddy to negotiate conveniently, a traveller would skirt such an obstacle by taking to private property on the other side of the survey pegs.

Two reports in 1863 substantiate this fact. A traveller, writing in a booklet published in London, had the following comment to make about his ride from Brisbane to Cleveland: "Cleveland is some two-and-twenty miles from the City of Brisbane, by a road on which it would puzzle even a London Jehu to drive a four-wheeled conveyance without depositing its contents in some rut or creek".

Is it possible this Englishman was referring to the new Cleveland Road, i.e. Wynnum Road? A report upon the condition of Queensland's main roads by a Parliamentary Select Committee in 1863 can be read to suggest that, in comparison with the other southern environs of Brisbane, Old Cleveland Road was in a satisfactory condition. Indeed, the new Cleveland Road was declared impassable, particularly from Galloway's Hill to the Flat. Furthermore, it was in such bad repair right from Kangaroo Point to Bulimba (Hawthorne) that the Parliamentary Report says people had to avoid it by going on private land all the way.

The year 1863 is as good a one as any to select as the end of the beginning of Old Cleveland Road. The beginning of the end of the road — at least in name — looked like taking place in 1975, when the Brisbane City Council was reported to favour a change of name for the road. An objection by the Redlands Shire Council apparently halted the proposal. Old Cleveland Road has thus lived to see the 148th year since it first appeared on a map.

References, chronologically

1823	Map by John Oxley. Shows Norman Creek (un-named).	Q.S.O.
1825	Map by E. Lockyer. "Norman's Creek" marked.	Q.S.O.
1829	Map by A. Cunningham. Route from Brisbane to Emu Point (Cleveland).	Steele
1829	Map by A. Cunningham. Route from "Cowper's Plains" to "Dunwich".	M.L.
1839	Survey: "Trace of Norman's Creek from its confluence with the Brisbane River. James Warner.	Q.S.O.
1841	Survey: "Plan of two creeks flowing into Moreton Bay, also part of a proposed line of road from a point called Cleveland Point (selected as the only apparently eligible site for a maratime township along this shore of the Bay). James Warner".	Q.S.O.
1842	Map by R. Dixon. "Map of Moreton Bay". Has route from "Cowper's Plains" to "Cleveland Point".	M.L.
1846	Map by W. Baker. "Darling Downs, New England, Clarence, Moreton Bay and Liverpool Plains districts, compiled expressly for Baker's Australian Atlas". Has "Gorman's Creek".	M.L.
1848	Survey: "Fourteen Special Country Lots, Parish of Bulimba, County of Stanley. James Warner". First southside land outside Brisbane town.	Q.S.O.
1850	Survey: "Survey of a practicable road from Brisbane in the County of Stanley to the proposed town of Cleveland in the same county. James Warner". Centre-line survey of proposed route for Old Cleveland Road.	Q.S.O.

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| 1851 | Survey: "Survey of Allotments in Sections 1 and 2 in the town of Cleveland. James Warner". | Q.S.O. |
| 1856 | Survey: "Survey of 10 small farms in the Parish of Bulimba, County of Stanley. James Warner". First Coorparoo land for auction. | Q.S.O. |
| 1857 | Survey: "Survey of 39 farms of various areas in the Parish of Bulimba, County of Stanley, also a line of road from the mouth of Norman Creek to the disembogement of Bulimba Creek. James Warner". First survey of land adjacent to Wynnum Road. | Q.S.O. |
| 1861 | Survey: "Plan and Survey of road from Coopers (sic) Plains to Rocky Crossing, Tingalpa Creek, Cleveland Road. Gould". First survey of this route, beginning at "dray ford". | Q.S.O. |